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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0297  
INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC  
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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
STATE FOR AF/E, AF/RSA AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Somalia - Continued Efforts to Gain Release of VOA Reporter

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#### Summary

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¶1. (SBU) Post continues to press the regional government of Puntland to release Voice of America (VOA) Somali Service reporter Mohamed Yasin Isaq, who was detained on December 21 (reftel) and remains in custody, with no charges filed against him. The Somalia Unit has spoken directly with Puntland President "Faroole," transmitted a letter from the Ambassador demanding Isaq's release, issued a local press release on the subject, and conducted an interview with VOA Somali Service. We also remain engaged through all possible channels with contacts in Puntland. We spoke directly with Isaq on December 30, and he indicated he was being treated adequately. End summary.

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#### VOA Reporter

Still in Detention

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¶2. (SBU) Voice of America (VOA) Somali Service reporter Mohamed Yasin Isaq has been detained in Puntland since his December 21 arrest (reftel). Puntland authorities have yet to file charges against him, and sources indicate Puntland President "Faroole" is interested in keeping Isaq in detention - and off the radio - for an indefinite period. In addition to the December 22 conversation with "Faroole" reported in reftel, Ambassador Ranneberger sent a letter (forwarded to AF) directly to "Faroole" on December 29. In addition, the Counselor for Somalia Affairs conducted a widely-covered interview with VOA Somali Service on December 28, which VOA followed with a press release reiterating the Counselor's assertion that Isaq should be released immediately. Post also issued a press release on the subject to Somali media (also forwarded to AF) on December 23. To date, we have had no public or private response from "Faroole."

¶3. (SBU) Post spoke directly with Isaq, via a phone connection with one of the Puntland authorities at the site of his detention, on

the morning of December 30. Isaq told us he was being treated adequately, with sufficient food and water. He said he would likely be moved to a police station in Bossaso shortly, following a pattern of relocations since his December 21 arrest. Isaq thanked the U.S. government for our efforts to secure his release.

¶4. (SBU) Post remains engaged with a variety of official contacts in Puntland, urging them to release Isaq and allow him to continue his work as a journalist. We also plan to continue our media engagements on this subject, particularly on other Puntland-based media outlets.

RANNEBERGER